

The legislation has received overwhelming support from a wide variety of groups such as the AMA. A new Washington Post/ABC News poll shows that 72 percent of Americans support the reauthorization of the CHIP program.

Mr. Speaker, I am heartened that 45 of my Republican colleagues in this body joined Democrats in passing this critical legislation. However, if the President wants to veto it, I hope other House Republicans will stand with America's children instead of with the President and vote to strengthen the CHIP program.

#### BURKE COUNTY FOCUSES ON EDUCATION

(Mr. MCHENRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, the strength of a community is best judged by how it deals with and faces adversity. Burke County, North Carolina exemplifies and illustrates how strong communities defeat hardship by channeling their efforts and resources for improvement.

When unemployment nearly quadrupled in 5 years, my constituents there banded together to build a better future. They recognize that an educated workforce is the key to economic growth, so they developed a plan to ensure that all high school graduates in the county have the opportunity to go to the local community college for a 2-year degree. Western Piedmont Community College is that college where they are offering it.

Through the hard work of Arrick Gordon and the Burke Alliance for Youth, the Burke Education Endowment Program is nearly at that goal. This weekend, the Overmountain Jam-boree and Barbecue Cookoff, which will combine two powerful forces, North Carolina barbecue and country music, will be held this weekend in Morganton, and that will raise the final sum needed to provide that much-needed education to the local youth. It shows the strength of the community, and it shows the strength of the people of North Carolina.

#### BLACKWATER USA

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's hearing in the Government Reform Committee left me with many concerns. I am concerned about Blackwater's role when they get involved in U.S. military operations.

In April and November of 2004, Blackwater personnel attached themselves to U.S. troops and engaged enemy positions. These actions may have set a bad precedent and may have been a catalyst that led to the September 16 shooting death of Iraqi civilians.

I also am concerned about Blackwater's unprecedented rise in procurement of Federal Government contracts. Initially, Blackwater was awarded no-bid contracts for security services in August of 2003 and June of 2004 worth more than \$73 million, and the President just today vetoed a bill for children's health that was worth \$11 billion.

#### HOUSE GOP GIVES PRESIDENT BLANK CHECK ON WAR FUNDING BUT NICKEL AND DIMES CHILDREN'S HEALTH

(Mr. HODES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to funding the war in Iraq, President Bush and the House Republicans are willing to write blank checks for billions of dollars with absolutely no questions asked. After billions misspent and mismanaged, the President is preparing a new war funding request for the upcoming year that is expected to cost the American taxpayer another \$190 billion. Contrast that with the disregard both the President and the majority of House Republicans have shown towards bipartisan legislation that would ensure that 10 million low-income children have access to health insurance.

President Bush has just vetoed a bill that would invest \$35 billion more in the CHIP program over the next 5 years and allow us to reach 4 million more children who are already eligible for the program. House Republicans will now have to decide if they will once again stand with a President who suffers from misguided priorities or if they will listen to the American people's will.

I say to my friends on the other side of the aisle, it's time to stand up for our kids and stand down from a discredited President.

#### PRIVATE SECURITY CONTRACTORS IN IRAQ

(Mr. HALL of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to decry our unprecedented use of unaccountable private security contractors in Iraq.

By some estimates, there are over 50,000 private security personnel working in Iraq. These contractors operate outside U.S. and Iraqi law, raising animosity toward Americans in the field and losing us hearts and minds in Iraq.

The activities of one of the most prominent contractors, Blackwater, highlight why they are a counterproductive influence in Iraq, and their activities must be curtailed.

Two weeks ago, Blackwater personnel guarding a State Department group were involved in a shootout that resulted in the deaths of as many as 17

Iraqis. Yesterday, the Government Reform Committee disclosed that Blackwater has been involved in 195 escalation of force incidents since 2005; and in 80 percent of those, Blackwater fired the first shots. These incidents, combined with others, clearly indicate that we need to stop putting contractors in Iraq and bring those there under control, which is why I have introduced legislation to freeze the number of contractors operating in Iraq at September 1 levels. And I am a proud cosponsor of the bill we will vote on today, the MEJA Expansion Act, to bring these contracts under control.

#### PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2740, MEJA EXPANSION AND ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2007

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, by the direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 702 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

#### H. RES. 702

*Resolved*, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2740) to require accountability for contractors and contract personnel under Federal contracts, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous